

We claim:

1. A drip tray sanitizing system, comprising:

a pump having an inlet port and an outlet port, wherein the inlet port is in communication with a sanitizing fluid source;

a valve having an inlet port and an outlet port, wherein the inlet port is in communication with a diluent source; and

a spray manifold disposed in a drip tray of a product dispenser, the spray manifold having an inlet port in communication with the outlet ports of the pump and the valve and multiple exit ports, wherein, when energized, the pump and the valve deliver a mixture of a sanitizing fluid and a diluent through the outlet ports of the spray manifold and into the drip tray for cleansing or sanitizing purposes.

2. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 1, further comprising a valve switch used to energize the valve when depressed by an operator.

3. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 2, further comprising a pump switch used to energize the pump when depressed by an operator.

4. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 3, wherein the valve switch and the pump switch may be energized substantially simultaneously.

5. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 1, wherein only the valve is energized to provide a rinsing function.

6. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 1, further comprising a mixing union coupled at a first inlet to the outlet of the pump, at a second inlet to the outlet of the valve, and at an outlet to the inlet port of the spray manifold, whereby the diluent and the sanitizing fluid streams merge before entry into the spray manifold to aid in mixing.

7. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 1, wherein the sanitizing fluid source is a container.
8. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 7, wherein the container is disposable.
9. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 7, wherein the container is refillable.
10. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 1, wherein the container is coupled to the drip tray sanitizing system with a quick disconnect connector to ease container change out.
11. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 1, further comprising a controller coupled to the pump and the valve, wherein the controller controls the pump and the valve in the delivery of the mixture of the sanitizing fluid and the diluent through the outlet ports of the spray manifold and into the drip tray for cleansing or sanitizing purposes.
12. The drip tray sanitizing system in claim 1, further comprising:
a backflow prevention device in communication with the inlet of the valve, such that the diluent cannot move from the valve to the diluent source.
13. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 11, wherein the controller energizes only the valve to rinse the drip tray.
14. The drip tray sanitizing system according to claim 11, wherein the controller energizes only the pump to move sanitizing fluid into the drip tray.

15. A product dispenser, comprising:
 - a housing, wherein the housing includes a controller;
 - a drip tray disposed on the housing;
 - a drip tray sanitizing system, wherein a spray manifold, disposed in the drip tray, is coupled to a pump in communication with a sanitizing fluid source and a valve in communication with a diluent source to deliver a mixture of a sanitizing fluid and a diluent to the drip tray for cleansing or sanitizing purposes when energized.
16. The product dispenser according to claim 15, further comprising a valve switch, wherein the valve switch energizes the valve when depressed by an operator.
17. The product dispenser according to claim 15, further comprising a pump switch, wherein the pump switch energizes the valve when depressed by an operator.
18. The product dispenser according to claim 15, further comprising a controller in communication with the valve and the pump, wherein the controller energizes the valve and the pump to deliver the mixture of the sanitizing fluid and the diluent to the drip tray.
19. The beverage dispenser according to claim 15, wherein the drip tray sanitizing system is internal to the beverage dispenser.
20. The beverage dispenser according to claim 15, wherein the drip tray sanitizing system is a retrofit into existing product dispenser.
21. The product dispenser according to claim 15, wherein the valve and the pump of the drip tray sanitizing system are remotely located from the product dispenser.
22. The product dispenser according to claim 18, wherein the controller energizes only the valve to provide a drip tray rinse function.

23. The product dispenser according to claim 18, wherein the controller energizes only the pump to move sanitizing fluid to the drip tray.
24. The product dispenser according to claim 18, wherein the drip tray sanitizing cleansing routines are initiated by the controller at a predetermined time.
25. A method of sanitizing a drip tray, comprising:
- a. pumping a sanitizing fluid from a sanitizing fluid source to an inlet port of a spray manifold disposed in a drip tray;
 - b. flowing a diluent from a diluent source to the inlet port of the spray manifold, thereby allowing the sanitizing fluid and the diluent to mix ; and
 - c. spraying a prescribed amount of the mixture into the drip tray to provide a cleansing or sanitizing effect.
26. The method of sanitizing a drip tray according to claim 25, wherein step a. is removed to provide a rinse function for the drip tray.
27. The method of sanitizing a drip tray according to claim 25, wherein step b. is removed to deliver only the sanitizing fluid.
28. The method of sanitizing a drip tray according to claim 25, wherein a controller controls the delivery of the sanitizing fluid and the diluent.
29. The method of claim 28, further comprising:
- d. repeating steps a. – c. at a prescribed interval to provide a continued cleansing effect.
30. The method of claim 28, wherein the controller activates only the valve to provide a rinsing effect.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein the controller activates only the pump to provide sanitizing fluid to the drip tray.
32. The method of claim 28, wherein the controller may use either a sanitize or a rinse routine to provide a cleansing effect.
33. The method of claim 25, wherein a controller energizes a pump to deliver the sanitizing fluid.
34. The method of claim 25, wherein a controller energizes a valve to allow the diluent to flow.
35. The method of claim 33, wherein the controller energizes a pump switch that energizes the pump, thereby delivering the sanitizing solution.
36. The method of claim 34, wherein the controller energizes a valve switch to energize that energizes the valve.